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LITERATURE OF THE DAY.

ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

The following anecdote, although more than once reprinted, is too characteric to be omitted. A Parisian bailiff dying in extreme poverty, some of his friends organized a subscription to defray the expenses of his interment, and one of them, who knew Dumas intimately, solicited a contribution. The novelist, without questioning the applicant as to the destination of the money, immediately gave him a louis; on which the other observed that the sum collected would now be sufficient to insure poor F—— a decent burial. "Ah," said Dumas, "is that what you want it for, to bury a bailiff? Why didn't you say so before? Take another louis while you are about it, and bury two." When his drama of "Kean" was produced at the Varieties, it was specially agreed between him and the manager, Dartois, that if the receipts of the first thirty performances should attain a total of sixty thousand francs, Dumas was to have two thousand francs for his share; but that if even a sou were wanting to complete the sum, he should receive nothing. As, however, the first twenty-nine nights had brought in no less than fifty-seven thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine francs, the dramatist felt tolerably sure of touching the promised "gratification," and toward nine o'clock on the following evening strolled into the manager's private room at the theatre, where, to his infinite surprise and disappointment, he learned that between the actual totality of the receipts and the amount stipulated there was a difference not in his favor of seven francs. "Extremely sorry, my dear Dumas," said Dartois, "but you know our agreement, and—" "Not a word more," interrupted the author of "Kean," "it can't be helped. Only," he continued, "it rather inconveniences me just now, for I had counted on the two thousand francs, and not an hour ago lent a friend the last louis I had in my pocket." "Is that all?" said the manager, opening his cash-box; "take what you want." "Twenty francs will be quite enough," replied Dumas, and helping himself to the sum in question, strolled out of the room as leisurely as he had entered it. A quarter of an hour later three more stalls had been taken, and the receipts of the thirty nights thereby raised to six thousand and five francs, the author's ingenuity having hit upon the very original plan of securing his prime with the manager's own money.—*All the Year Round.*

MECHANICAL MUSIC.

The Black Forest is famous for these mechanical organs—orchestrions, as they are called—and in some instances they are brought to great perfection. There is a shop close to the exhibition, bearing the name of Lamy Sohne, full of clocks and singing-birds and orchestrions, where you may pass half an hour in a fairyland of surprises and all kinds of mechanical music. One morning I went in with an old lady and gentleman—the latter a grave dignitary of the Church of England. "A very tiring place," said the old lady; "all up and down hill; the only fault I find with the Black Forest. Could 't they level it, my dear?"—to her husband—"or build viaducts or something! Or at the very least, couldn't they organize pony chaises all over the country—like those, you know, that we found so useful at Bournemouth last year?" "Take a chair, my love," said the old gentleman, sympathetically, without committing himself to an opinion. And he placed one for her, while the young man in the shop (whose jolly, good-natured face and broad grin delighted one to behold) wound up the orchestrion. The old lady sat down somewhat heavily from sheer exhaustion, and immediately the chair struck up the lively air of "The Watch on the Rhine," with a decidedly martial influence upon its occupant. She sprang from her seat as if it had been a gridiron, and asked her husband reproachfully if he was amusing himself at her expense, and whether her age was not sufficient to secure her from practical joking. "Dear me!" cried he, in amazement, looking at the offending chair as though he expected it to walk away of its own accord. "What a musical nation these Black Foresters are! It's music everywhere! The very chairs you sit down upon are full of it." At this moment the orchestrion struck up a selection from "Don Giovanni," and the old lady recovered her amiability in listening to a really splendid instrument. I left them still enjoying it, marveling at all the birds and boxes, and thinking each one more wonderful than another.—*The Argosy.*

THE ELEPHANT IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

Matthew Paris mentions that the Soldan of Babylon, Malek el Kamel, sent an elephant as a rare present to the Emperor Frederick II., in the year A. D. 1229 (Sir Frederick Madden's edition of the "Historia Minor," vol. ii., p. 314). But it was not until the year 1255 that the first elephant was seen in England. This was presented by the King of France to King Henry III. The chronicler, John of Oxenedes, chronicles the arrival of this animal at London, and declares that it was believed that none had ever been brought to England before. Of the elephant, Matthew Paris made a very good drawing, the original of which is still extant among the Cottonian manuscripts in the British Museum (Nero, D. I.); and an equally good, but smaller, drawing is given by John de Walingeford, in another Cottonian manuscript (Julius, D. VII.) The beast arrived at Sandwich, and was conveyed to the Tower of London, where the sheriffs had been directed by royal precept to build a house for it, forty feet in length and twenty feet in breadth, taking care to let the building have sufficient strength to be fit for any other purpose. The animal itself was ten feet in height from the top of the back to the ground, and was ten years old. It lived on to the forty-first year of Henry III., A. D. 1257, in which year it appears from the "Chancellor's Roll" that for the maintinance of the elephant and its keeper, from Michaelmas to St. Valentine's day, immediately before the animal died, at the age of twelve years only, the charge amounted to £16 13s. 1d. The name of the keeper is recorded to have been John Gooch. Many chroniclers mention this elephant—(*e. g.*, Matthew Paris, iii., 324; Annals of Burton, i., 329). The "Majora" of Matthew Paris states (vol. v., p. 489) that no elephant had ever before been seen on this side of the Alps, but that statement will hardly agree with the record of the elephant presented to the German Emperor in A. D. 1229, as already mentioned. Crowds of people went to see the King's elephant, according to this author, and we may well believe it. The drawings seem to indicate an Indian rather than an African elephant, but it is difficult to determine the question.

A NEW RACE OF PEOPLE IN RUSSIA.

In the *Revue Scientifique*, Mr. G. Le Bon treats at some length a hitherto unknown people inhabiting an obscure part of Russia. Peculiar circumstances having induced the author to visit the Tatra Mountains, a very curious and beautiful region, and one very little known, since he was apparently the first to traverse it, he found there a territory surrounded on all sides by steep mountains and inhabited by a people speaking a different language from the nations surrounding them and with whom they had no intercourse. These people, although less than a century ago given up to brigandage, as the author learned in his study of them, are now very industrious and honest. In spite of a climate so harsh that it would be necessary to go to the extreme north to find a similar one; in spite of a very inferior soil, and in spite of an almost Lacedæmonian diet, consisting mainly of oats, milk, and water, they are living in a most remarkable state of prosperity. They are clearly distinguished from all the neighbors in their external aspect, in their quick intelligence, and in their artistic and literary tendencies.

The villages inhabited by these new people are situated in the territory called Podhale, at the foot of the above-named mountains. This territory, as before stated, being surrounded on all sides by steep mountains, difficult of access, is almost as isolated from the rest of the world as if it were an island in mid-ocean.

As regards its origin, Mr. Le Bon thinks the original stock was Polish, which in past ages became intermixed with individuals coming from different peoples. In isolating itself more and more, and not uniting with outsiders, and in constantly being submitted to the action of the same environment and same selection, the primitive agglomeration has become more and more and more homogeneous and finally formed a new race, whose homogeneity may possibly still increase, but which already possesses common hereditary characters that permits it to be clearly differentiated from all surrounding races.

AT THE GREAT BATTLEFIELD.

After looking over the battlefield of Chancellorsville I went back to the brick house for dinner. During my absence a little red-headed man had arrived, and he was introduced by the woman as her brother-in-law. As soon as I came in he began on me:

"Vhas you under Sheneral Shackson in dis fight?"

"No."

"I tell you dot vhas an awful fight, my frendt. Blood poured out shust like it vhas raining. Maype you vhas under Sheneral Lee, up der blank road?"

"No, I wasn't."

"Not under Lee? But dot Sheneral Lee vhas an awful fighter. Maype you vhas mit Early, up at Fredericksburg?"

"No."

"So? Vhell, dat Early he vhas a splendid Sheneral, and he like to fight all der time. I feels sure you vhas mit Early. Maype you vhas mit Hooker, eh?"

"No."

"Not mit Hooker down here! Den you vhas mit Sedgwick up der road?"

"No."

"Vhell, py golly! Not mit Shackson nor Lee—not mit Hooker nor Sedgwick! Vhell! Vhell? Dot beats me all *cafer*."

Both of us fell to and began eating, and nothing further was said until the meal was finished, and we had gone out to look at some old cannon wheels in the yard. Then my friend put his hand on my shoulder, lowered his voice, and said:

"My frendt, if you vhas not mit Lee, nor Shackson, nor Hooker, in dis fight, maype you und me vhas in der same place?"

"Maybe so. Where were you?"

"In Canada," he whispered.

He called "good-by" after me as I rode away, but I wouldn't have answered him for a hundred dollars.—*Detroit Free Press.*

A Philadelphia woman, who died recently, at the age of ninety-two, spent her honeymoon with her husband in Napoleon's expedition to Moscow. She saw the burning of that city, and on several occasions talked with the Emperor of the French. Her husband having been wounded, she dragged him over the frozen ground for nine weeks on a hand-sled. A guide betrayed them to the Cossacks, and they were held prisoners for eighteen months, and were exchanged just in time to suffer the horrors and privations of Napoleon's retreat. Her sex was never discovered during all this time. Her experience seemed to have insured her a long life.